would accrue to the Crown and to Spain from the discovery of the sea-route to the Indies, persuaded her to neglect the adverse views of the pedants upon whom she had previously relied. When at last she had acquiesced, the question of finance remained. Once more, Santangel came forward, advancing without interest no less than 1,140,000 maravedis towards the expenses of the expedition. A certain amount was still requisite; this was found by Don Isaac Abrabanel. (The story that the Queen pawned her Crown jewels for the purpose of financing the expedition is a pious invention.)

Preparations for the expedition were now pushed forward. Columbus' crew consisted of some ninety men all told. Among the few of these whose names have been preserved, persons of known Jewish origin are prominent. One was Alonso de la Calle, whose very name indicated that he had been born in the Jewish quarter. Roderigo Sanches, a relative of the High Treasurer, joined the expedition at the personal request of the Queen. A New Christian named Marco was ship's surgeon; while Mestre Bernal, the ship's physician, had been punished a couple of years previously by the Inquisition as a Judaiser. Land was first sighted by the Marrano sailor, Rodrigo de Triana; and Luis de Torres, the interpreter, who had been baptised only a few days before the expedition sailed, was the first European to set foot in the New World. The expedition, moreover, was equipped with the astronomical tables

and instruments of Abraham Zacuto and other Jewish scientists.

On his return to Europe, the famous letters in which Columbus first announced the news of his discoveries were addressed to his Marrano patrons, Luis de Santangel and Gabriel Sanches. In view of all this evidence, it may be stated without exaggeration that the discovery of the New World as early as 1492 would have been